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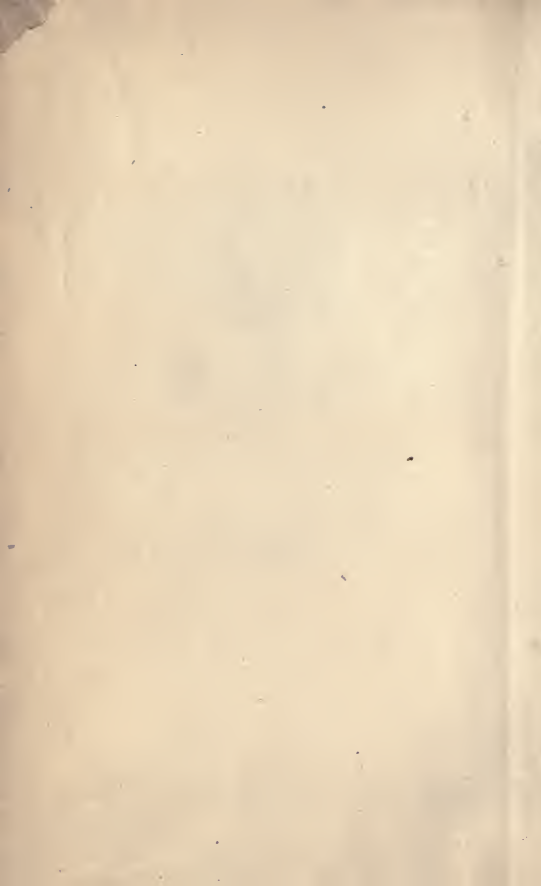
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THE

SONG OF DROP O' WATHER.

BY

HARRY WANDSWORTH SHORTFELLOW.

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APOLOGY FOR THERE BEING  
NO PREFACE.

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AUTHOR (*considering*). People expect a preface ; and this is the place for one. But there is no preface in the great "Indian Edda" which has occasioned this poem. The author of that work gives his explanation to the public in the Notes and Vocabulary ; then, of course, mine also, ought (and is) to be found in the Notes and Vocabulary to "The Song of Drop o' Wather."

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THE  
SONG OF DROP O' WATHER.

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Introduction.

YE who love the haunts of Town-Life,  
Love the kennel and the gutter,  
Love the doorway of the gin-shop,  
Love the mud about the kerb-stones,  
And the drippings from the houses,  
And the splashing of the rain-spouts  
Through their palisade of gratings,  
And the thunder of the coaches,  
Whose innumerable echoes,  
Rear like sea-waves on the shingle;—  
Listen to these wild traditions,  
To this song of Drop o' Wather !

Ye who love a nation's legends,  
Love the ballads of a people,  
That like voices from afar off

Call to us to stop and listen,  
Speak in tones so hoarse and roopy,  
Scarcely can the ear distinguish  
Whether they are hummed or shouted ;—  
Listen to this London Legend,  
To this song of Drop o' Wather !

## I.

## Drop o' Wather's Childhood.

DOWNWARD through the darkening twilight,  
In the days long time ago, now,  
In the last of drunken stages,  
By the Half-Moon fell poor Norah,  
On the pavement fell poor Norah,  
Just about to be a mother.

She'd been tipping with some women,  
Just within the Wine-Vaults' swing-door,  
When her Gossip, out of mischief,  
Partly idle, partly spiteful,  
Pushed the swing-door from behind her,  
Pushed in twain the Wine-Vaults' door-flap,  
And poor Norah tumbled backward,  
Downward through the darkening twilight,  
On the gangway foul, the pavement,  
On the gangway foul with mud-stains.

“ See ! a wench falls ! ” cried the people ;

“ Look, a tipsy wench is falling ! ”

There amidst the gaping starers,  
There amidst the idle passers,  
On the gangway foul, the pavement,  
In the murky darkened twilight,  
Poor drunk Norah bore a boy-babe.  
Thus was born young Drop o' Wather,  
Thus was born the child of squalor.  
He was named, by those who knew him,  
Out of joke, and fun, and larking,  
For what's called an Irish reason,  
Or, by folks who sport the Classics,  
*A lucus à non lucendo,*  
Like, for all it is so unlike,  
Hold a thing to be another,  
For the sake of contradiction,  
Or the sake of droll connexion ;  
So the folks who knew our hero,  
Gave his nickname for this reason,—  
'Cause his mother never touched a  
Drop of Water in her lifetime.

At the door on fine spring evenings,  
Played the little Drop o' Wather ;

Heard the cry of "Buy my inguns!"  
Heard the cry "Young raddyshees, yere!"  
Calls of cadger, costermonger;  
"Bilin'-apples!" said the huckster;  
"Pies-all-'ot!" still said the pieman.

Saw the pot-boy, Wall-eyed Tommy,  
Trudging through the dusk of evening,  
With the shrillness of his whistle  
Piercing all the courts and alleys.  
And he sang the song of street-boys,  
Sang the song the pot-boy taught him;—  
"Wall-eyed Tommy, he's the cove, boys!  
He's the ranting, roaring blade, boys!  
He's the lad, the daring fellow!  
He's the chap, to carry ale-cans,  
Pots of beer, and all them 'ere, boys!"

Saw the balls at the pawnbroker's,  
Balls alike, and three in number,  
Saw the gold and burnish on them,  
Bawled, "What are those? I say, mother!"  
And the fuddled Norah answered,  
"Once a cricketer, when angry,  
Seized his ball, and bowling, threw it  
Up against the shop times three-fold,

Right against the shop he threw it ;  
 'Tis its tri-ghost that you see there."

Saw the gallows near the prison,  
 In the morning sky, the gallows ;  
 Bawled, " What is that ? I say, mother !"  
 And the fuddled Norah answered,  
 "'Tis the gallows-tree, the gibbet ;  
 All the naughty boys of London,  
 All the wicked ones and careless,  
 When in town they steal and pilfer,  
 Hang on that 'ere tree above us."

When he heard the thieves at midnight,  
 Hooting, laughing in the alley,  
 " What is that ?" he cried, half frightened ;  
 " What is that ? Now tell me, mother !"  
 And the fuddled Norah answered,  
 " That's the thieves and prigs together,  
 Talking in their own cant language,  
 Hoaxing, chaffing one another."

Then the little Drop o' Wather  
 Learned of all the thieves their language ;  
 Learned their slang, and learned their by-words,  
 Twigged their nicknames, knew their lodgings,  
 Where they hid themselves from justice ;

Talked with them whene'er he met them,  
Called them "Drop o' Wather's Cronies."

Of all prigs he learned the language,  
Learned their gag, and all their secrets,  
Found out all their haunts and dodges,  
Picked up where they hid their booty,  
How they packed the swag so closely,  
Why they fought so shy and wary ;  
Talked with them whene'er he met them,  
Called them "Drop o' Wather's Brothers."

## II.

## Drop o' Wather and Pudgy-Whizz.

Out of childhood into manhood  
Now had grown young Drop o' Wather,  
Skilled in all the craft of filchers,  
Learned in all the slang of robbers,  
In all ways and means of cribbing,  
In all knowing arts and dodges.

Swift of foot was Drop o' Wather ;  
He could pitch a pebble from him,  
And run forward with such fleetness,  
That the pebble fell behind him !  
Strong of arm was Drop o' Wather ;  
He could fling ten pebbles upward,  
Fling them with such strength and swiftness,  
That the tenth had left his fingers  
Ere the first to ground had fallen.

He had bludgeon, Millemlikefun,



Good strong bludgeon, made of ash-wood ;  
 When into his hand he took it,  
 He could smite a fellow's head off,  
 He could knock him into next week.  
 He had ankle-boots so jemmy,  
 Good strong ankle-boots of calf-skin ;  
 When he put them on his trotters,  
 When he laced them up so tightly,  
 At each step three feet he measured.

From his lair went Dropp o' Wather  
 Dressed for roving, armed for plunder ;  
 Dressed in shooting-jacket natty,  
 Velvetten, with pearl-white buttons ;  
 On his head a spick-and-span tile,  
 Round his waist a vest of scarlet ;  
 In his mouth a sprig of shamrock,  
 In his breast a dashing brooch-pin,  
 Gold mosaic, set with sham stones ;  
 With his bludgeon, Millemlikefun,  
 With his ankle-boots so jemmy.

Warning said old fuddled Norah,  
 " Go not forth, son Dropp o' Wather,  
 To the quarter of the West-End,  
 To the regions, Hyde-Park, May-Fair,

Lest they nab you (chaps from Bow-street),  
Lest they clap you into prison."

But the daring Drop o' Wather  
Heeded not her woman's warning ;  
Forth he went along the alley,  
At each step three feet he measured ;  
Tempting looked the shops about him,  
Tempting looked the things within them ;  
Bright and fine the showy jewels,  
Smart and gay the newest fashions,  
Brown and smooth cigars in boxes,  
All that set his heart a-longing,  
Longing with the wish to crib them.

So he sauntered Westward, Westward,  
Left the alley far behind him,  
Left the low and filthy places ;  
Crossed the frowsy Seven-Dials,  
Crossed the noisy street of Holborn,  
Passed the corner of St. Giles's,  
Passed the then-called road of Oxford,  
Passed the dwellings of the tradesmen,  
Came into the stylish quarters,  
To the region of the West-End,

Where along the dusty Park-drives,  
 Rode the dandies and the ladies,  
 Rulers of the mode in London.

Struck a-heap was Dropp' Wather  
 At the beauty of the women ;  
 In their faces he peeped slyly,  
 Then, more boldly he approached them,  
 Stared like Hodge, the country bumpkin,  
 When he stares at booths in fair-time.

Filled with scorn were all the ladies,  
 When they noted Dropp' Wather,  
 Saw the looks he cast towards them,  
 How he glanced at all their faces,  
 How he scrutinised their beauty,  
 From the pathway as he lounged there.

In a carriage sat a fair one,  
 Lolling back in graceful posture,  
 On her arm lay couched a lap-dog,  
 Sweetest lap-dog, Pudgy-Wheezy ;  
 Like floss-silk down drooped his long ears,  
 O'er his eyes as bright as topaz,  
 And he blinked at all the passers,  
 With his eyes as bright as topaz,

And his jetty coat so wavy,  
And his snub nose out o' window,  
Nearest window, which was open.

Now the wily Drop o' Wather  
Marked a reticule down hanging  
From the left arm of the fair one ;  
Held his breath, as if resolving ;  
And then snatched all quick and sudden,  
Snatched the reticule of velvet,  
Snatched it surely and securely !

Sharp the lap-dog, Pudgy-Wheezy,  
Tried to bite the bag-purloiner ;  
Drop o' Wather cried in anguish,  
Cried in well-dissembled anguish,  
“ Drat the dog ! he's bit my finger ! ”  
“ Did he, man ? ” said then the fair one,  
“ Serve you right ; you should not touch  
him ! ”

Loudly barked the silky lap-dog,  
Loudly barked he, Pudgy-Wheezy :  
Brightly flashed his eyes of topaz,  
Brightly gleamed his teeth of ivory,  
High went up his short snub muzzle,  
High in air, as shrill his barking ;

Ceased not yaffing, snarling, snapping,  
Till he'd driven back th' intruder.

Then away went Dropp o' Wather,  
Well content to get off freely ;  
In his pouch the bag of velvet,  
In his hand he swung his bludgeon,  
Faithful bludgeon, Millemlikefun,  
Looking round him, gay and jaunty,  
Back he turned towards his alley,  
Homeward bent his steps so springy.

Only once his pace he slackened,  
Only once he stopped or loitered,  
Stopped to buy a leather tassel  
Of the famous Tassel-maker,  
In the lane of dirty Drury,  
Where the stalls of Covent Garden  
Might be seen from certain turnings  
If we could see round a corner.

There the famous Tassel-maker  
Made his tassel-bows of leather,  
Tassel-bows for umberellas,  
Tassel-bows for sticks and sword-canes ;  
Smooth and sharp-cut into fringes,  
Stout and handsome, stiff yet dangling.

With him dwelt his blue-eyed daughter,  
Playful as the kitten, Minny,  
Apt her name, 'twas Minnie Harper :  
Eyes as clear as bits of crystal,  
Feet that danced like Naples spiders,  
Ringlets curling like a corkscrew,  
And a sprightly little giggle ;  
So he named her from the liquor,  
From the liquor that he best loved,  
Minnie Harper, Frisky-Whisky.

Was it then for leather tassels  
Tassel-bows of umberellas,  
Tassel-bows of sticks and sword-canes,  
That young Drop o' Wather loitered  
In the lane of dirty Drury ?

Was it not to see the damsel,  
See the face of Frisky-Whisky  
Smirking from behind the counter,  
Hear the music of her giggle  
From behind the wooden counter,  
As one sees the Dew of Mountain  
Beaming, sparkling through the bottle,  
As one hears the potheen whisky  
Gurgling from the neck of bottle ?

Who can say what whims and fancies  
Fill the scapegrace heads of young men ?  
Who can say what pretty notions  
Busied now young Drop o' Wather ?  
All he told to dull old Norah,  
When he reached the lair, at supper,  
Was the pilfer from the carriage,  
Was his bite from Pudgy-Wheezy.  
Not a word he said of tassels,  
Not a word of Frisky-Whisky.

## III.

## Drop o' Wather's Fasting.

You shall hear how Drop o' Wather  
Starved and fasted in the alley;  
Not for want of skill in cribbing,  
Not for want of craft in filching,  
Not for scruples in the conscience,  
Or compunction touching victims;  
But because he'd met no people  
He could turn to present profit,  
Present profit and advantage.

On the first day of his fasting  
Through the busy streets he wandered;  
Watched the shops so full of dainties,  
Watched the poulterer's stocked with poultry,  
Saw the pheasant trussed for roasting,  
Saw the hare, Poor-Puss, or Lion,  
Saw the plover's eggs in baskets,



Saw the pigeons, plump and fattened,  
Saw the partridges in leashes,  
Saw the ducks and fowls in couples,  
Saw the fat bird, Goosey-Gander,  
Sucking-morsel, Piggy-Wiggy,  
All these good things, spread before him.  
“Arrah, ochone!” he cried, desponding,  
“Must our lives depend on these things?”

On the next day of his fasting,  
By the market-stalls he wandered,  
Through the market, Covent-Garden,  
Saw the forced fruit, grapes and peaches,  
Saw the raspberry, White-Giant,  
And the strawberry, Eliza,  
And the gooseberry, Red-Hairy,  
And the 'sparagus, in bundles,  
New potatoes, fresh cucumbers,  
Filling all the air with fragrance!  
“Arrah, ochone!” he cried, desponding,  
“Must our lives depend on these things?”

On the third day of his fasting,  
By the fishmonger's he pondered,  
By the sloping slab of marble;  
Saw the codfish, Dull-Eye, lying,

Trout bedropped with spots of amber,  
Saw the silver fish, the salmon,  
Like a moonbeam lined with sunshine,  
Saw the carp, the mackerel, lobster,  
And the herring, Red, or Bloater,  
And old Spider-Legs, the crawfish !  
" Arrah, ochone !" he cried, desponding,  
" Must our lives depend on these things ?"

On the fourth day of his fasting,  
In his lair he lay exhausted ;  
From his bed of sheets and blankets,  
Dozing with half shut-up eyelids,  
Faint with hungry dreams and visions,  
Till it swam quite round and round him,  
Seemed to heave like wave or billow.

Then he saw a youth approaching,  
Dressed in coat of humble fustian,  
Coming through the bedroom passage,  
Up the staircase of the lodging ;  
Cap of felt pulled o'er one eyebrow,  
On his hair so short and sandy.

Standing at the open doorway,  
Straight he looked at Drop o' Wather,  
Looked with pity and compassion,

At his hungry face and features ;  
And in accents like the piping  
Of the east wind through a key-hole,  
Said he, " Well, young Dropp o' Wather !  
Come, my hearty ! Bear up bravely !  
'Ta'n't because you're not so clever,  
Not for want of skill in cribbing,  
Not for want of craft in filching,  
Not for false ideas of conscience,  
Or some idle whim 'bout victims,  
But because you've met no people  
You could turn to ready profit,  
Ready profit and advantage.

" From our captain I've just stepped up,  
I, your friend, you know, Bob Dabbin,  
Come to warn you and instruct you,  
How by waiting and by watching,  
You shall gain what you have longed for.  
Rise up from your bed of blankets,  
Rise up, old chap, listen to me !"

Faint with hunger, Dropp o' Wather  
Got up from his bed of blankets,  
From the bedclothes out he crawled him,  
Down into a chair he flopped him,

Sat, and chatted with Bob Dabbin ;  
At his talk he felt new courage  
Rousing in his mind and body,  
Felt new strength, and pluck, and vigour,  
Run through every limb and muscle.

So they chatted there together  
In the quiet of the chamber,  
And the more they talked and argued,  
Stronger still felt Drop o' Wather,  
For his thoughtful friend, Bob Dabbin,  
Brought him, just to stay his stomach,  
Brought him, just to raise his spirits,  
Bread and cheese, and mug of Burton ;  
And in rapture, Drop o' Wather  
Cried aloud, " Long live Bob Dabbin !  
Yes, my friend in need, Bob Dabbin !"

## IV.

## Drop o' Wather's Friends.

Two chief friends had Drop o' Wather,  
Chosen out from all the others,  
Dear to him for certain reasons,  
And he always shook their daddles  
With good-will, and no mistaking,  
Chinny-panpipes, the musician,  
And the very strong man, Queershin.

Most approved by Drop o' Wather  
Was the cheerful Chinny-panpipes,  
He, the best of street musicians,  
He, the constantest of grinders,  
Grinding ever on his organ,  
Round he turned the handle always,  
Slow as tortoise, quick as thought is,  
'Cording to the tune he grinded.

When he played, the idlers listened ;  
All the children gathered round him,  
All the women stood to hear him ;

Stood in doorways, stood at windows,  
Stood to hear him play his ditties.  
From the piping stops he sounded  
Fluty notes so sweet and mellow,  
That the boy, the Nobby-Butcher  
Ceased to whistle in the alley;  
That the cage-birds ceased from singing,  
And the squirrel, Scuggy-Cocktail,  
Ceased his clatter in the twirl-box,  
And the rabbit, Bunny-Twitchnose,  
Sat quite still to peer and listen.

Yes, the boy, the Nobby-Butcher,  
Stopping, said, "Here, Chinny-panpipes,  
Teach me how to turn that new tune,  
As you grind it on your organ."

Yes, the blackbird, Jet-with-gold-bill,  
Jealous, said, "Here, Chinny-panpipes,  
Teach me tunes as blithe and merry,  
Teach me airs as new in fashion."

Yes, gay Song-sky-high, the lark, too,  
Chirping, said, "Here, Chinny-panpipes,  
Teach me favourite tunes from theatres,  
Teach me popular airs at concerts."  
And the thrush, poor Speckle-breaster,  
Fretting, said, "Here, Chinny-panpipes,

Teach me tunes to soothe my sadness,  
Soothe me in my jail of wicker."

Very dear to Drop o' Wather  
Was the cheerful Chinny-panpipes,  
He, the best of street-musicians,  
He, the constantest of grinders,  
For his cheerfulness he loved him,  
And his grinding on his organ.

Dear, too, unto Drop o' Wather  
Was the very strong man, Queershin,  
He, the strongest of all tumblers,  
He of acrobats the ablest;  
For his wondrous strength he loved him,  
For his strength and his good-humour.

Idle in his youth was Queershin,  
Very careless, rash, and reckless,  
Never played with other children,  
Neither grocer's boy nor baker's,  
Not like other children was he;  
But they saw that much he practised,  
Practised leaping over postés,  
Practised standing on his head long.

"Lazy Queershin!" said his mother,  
"In my work you never help me,  
In the summer you are roaming

Idly in the courts and alleys ;  
In the winter you are jumping  
Over dressers in the kitchen !  
In the coldest days of winter  
I must break the ice for washing ;  
With my clothes you never help me !  
In the yard my clothes are hanging,  
Dripping wet for want of wringing ;  
Go and wring them, Noddle-dizzy !  
Go and dry them on the clothes-line."

Slowly from the kitchen, Queershin  
Went, but made no grumpy answer ;  
From the house went forth in silence,  
Took the clothes that hung together,  
Dripping wet, all in a bundle ;  
Like a wisp of straw he wrung them,  
Like a wisp of straw he tore them,  
Could not wring them without tearing,  
Such the strength was in his fingers.  
"Lazy Queershin !" said his father,  
"In my shop you never help me ;  
Every stool you touch is broken,  
Snapped asunder every chair-back ;  
You put all to rack and ruin,  
Play Old Harry with my chattels."



“Lazy Queershin!” said lads truant,  
As they sported in the alley ;  
“Why stand idly looking at us,  
Leaning on the post behind you ?  
Come, play marbles with the others,  
Play at pitch-and-toss together.”

Lazy Queershin made no answer,  
To their jeering made no answer,  
Only turned, and calmly spitting  
In his hands for one short moment,  
Clasped the lamp-post in his fingers,  
Swarmed it up from its foundation,  
Poised himself in air an instant,  
Then pitched sheer upon the pavement,  
Dropped sheer down just like a plummet,  
And looked smilingly around him.

And these two, as I have told you,  
Were the friends of Drop o' Wather ;  
Chinny-panpipes, the musician,  
And the very strong man, Queershin.  
Long they lived like pals together,  
Talked with busy heads together,  
Thinking hard, and hard contriving,  
How to turn the world to profit.

## V.

## Drop o' Wather's Filching.

FORTH along through Bedford Bury,  
By the Strand, near Big-Thame-water,  
With his filching-line and tackle  
For the twisting out of pockets  
Whatsoever he could catch there,  
Such as handkerchiefs Bandana,  
But, above all, golden watches ;  
In his finger light, exulting,  
All alone went Drop o' Wather.

In the coat's unbuttoned pocket  
He could spy the treasures lying  
Far down in the depths below him,  
Spy the yellow wipe, the fogle,  
Like an omelet on a platter,  
Spy the pocket-book, the full purse,  
Like rich jewels in their cases,  
In their white and satin cases.

At his post was Drop o' Wather  
With his filching-line and tackle,  
Ready there to hook out neatly,  
And pick pockets with advantage ;  
At his side, with tail unwagging,  
Stood the bull-dog, Majordomo ;  
In his eyes a bloodshot fierceness,  
In his mouth a savage purpose.

In the deep fob of the stranger  
Lay the watch, the Gold-Repeater,  
Lay the watch, the First-rate Ticker ;  
With one hand it marked the hours,  
With the other, seconds, minutes,  
With its face it showed the true time.

There it lay in all its splendour ;  
From it ran a chain to guard it,  
Bréguet-key, attached, hung pendent ;  
Withinside were wheels and movements,  
Jewelled holes, with springs of blue steel,  
Cased it was, with engine-turning ;  
Seals of blood-stone, red and dark green,  
Seals of amethyst, cornelian ;  
And it lay there, at the bottom,  
Marking with its hand the minutes,

As above it Drop o' Wather,  
With his finger light came stealthy,  
With his filching-line and tackle.

“Take my hook!” cried Drop o' Wather,  
Down into the depths beneath him,  
“Take my hook, O Gold-Repeater!  
Come up from your depth of pocket,  
Let us see if I can't get you!”  
And he dropped his filching-tackle  
Right into the broad-cloth shelter,  
Tugged out vainly from the trowser,  
Tugged impatient from the trowser  
And repeated, almost out loud,  
“Take my hook, O First-rate Ticker!”

Quiet lay the Gold-Repeater,  
Marking measuredly the minutes,  
Looking up at Drop o' Wather,  
Listening to his eager whisper,  
His objectionable bother,  
Till, affronted at the boldness,  
Said to Portmonnaie-Morocco,  
To the purse, the Red Morocco,  
“Take the hook of this rude fellow,  
Break the line of Drop o' Wather!”

In his fingers Drop o' Wather  
Felt his filch-line jerk and tighten ;  
As he drew it careful towards him,  
With his finger light and skilful ;  
Down beside him, close beside him,  
Stood the bulldog, Majordomo,  
Mute and watchful by his master.

Full of scorn was Drop o' Wather  
When he saw the purse come upward,  
Saw the purse, the Red Morocco,  
Coming nearer, nearer to him ;  
And he muttered through his shut teeth,  
" Asy ! asy ! Bad luck to you !  
You are but the purse Morocco ;  
You are not the prey I wanted,  
You are not the First-rate Ticker !"

But he put it in his pocket,  
Put the purse away quite safely ;  
And the watch, the Gold-Repeater,  
Said to pocket-book, of Russia,  
" Take the hook of this rash footpad,  
Break the line of Drop o' Wather !"

Slowly upward, sometimes sticking,  
Like a plane at knot in deal-wood,

Came the pocket-book, of Russia,  
Dragged the line of Drop o' Wather,  
Swung with all its weight upon it,  
Made a stirring in the pocket,  
Taxed the finger's lightness smartly  
To prevent the stranger's notice  
Being drawn towards the motion  
Going on so near his person,  
Lest he'd call the far-off Charleys  
Nodding in their distant watch-box.

But when Drop o' Wather saw it  
Come, at length, from flap of pocket,  
With its sides of Russia leather,  
Tart he whispered in vexation,  
"Asy! asy! Bad luck to you!  
You are Pocket-book, of Russia,  
You are not the thing I wanted,  
You are not the First-rate Ticker!"

But he stuffed it in his pocket,  
Stuffed the Pocket-book, of Russia;  
And again the Gold-Repeater  
Heard the words of Drop o' Wather,  
Heard his summons sharp and urgent,  
His objectionable bother,  
Whispered eager down the pocket.

From the bottom of the deep fob,  
Up it rose with sullen glitter,  
Quivering in each spring of blue steel,  
Trembling in each wheel and movement,  
Gleaming bright with all its jewels ;  
In its wrath it darted upward,  
Bell-like clear it struck the hour,  
Drew its owner's roused attention  
To the theft of Drop o' Wather.

Down into a darksome turning  
Plunged the headlong Drop o' Wather,  
As a dog pursued by rabble  
Darts and races down the alleys,  
So ran he in dread and darkness  
From the hue-and-cry behind him,  
Shouting through that veil of darkness.

And he dropped it in his hurry,  
Dropped the massive Gold-Repeater,  
Dropped the jewelled First-rate Ticker  
Smash upon the hard stone pavement ;  
Heard the hue-and-cry more near him,  
As he staggered blindly onwards,  
Sick at heart, and faint and weary.

Panting then did Drop o' Wather  
Curse his fingers' lightness sorely,

Lest because of Gold-Repeater  
He might come to go to Newgate.  
But the bulldog, Majordomo,  
Kept the crowd at bay, and fiercely  
Flew at constable from Bow-street,  
Pinned him down till Drop o' Wather  
Got away all safe and soundly.

Then said Drop o' Wather to him,  
"O my trusty friend, my bulldog,  
Bravely have you fought to help me;  
Take the thanks of Drop o' Wather,  
And the name which now he gives you;  
For hereafter and for ever,  
Be no longer Majordomo,  
Tough-and-True I'll always call you."



## VI.

## Drop o' Wather's Wooing.

“As unto the cord the tassel,  
So unto the man is woman,  
Though she decks him, she holds by him,  
Though adorning, yet depending,  
Useless each without the other!”

Thus the young man, Drop o' Wather,  
Thought within himself, and wondered  
Why he felt so strangely bothered,  
So uneasy in his mind, each  
Time he thought of Minnie Harper,  
Of the lovely Frisky-Whisky,  
In the lane of dirty Drury.

“Take a wife of your own nation,”  
Maudlin said old gin-soaked Norah;  
“Don't ye take a girl that's English;  
Don't ye, boy; now don't, my darlint!”

Like a peat-fire warmly blazin'  
Are ould Ireland's charmin' daughters ;  
As for English, they're all moonshine ;  
Let 'em be, they're none so handsome !”

Thus dissuading spoke old Norah,  
And young Drop o' Wather answered,  
“ Just hear this, good mother Norah ;  
Very pleasant is the peat-fire,  
But I find the English handsome,  
Dearly do I love such moonshine.”

Crossly then said blear-eyed Norah,  
“ Bring not here a stuck-up damsel,  
Bring not here a ma'amish proud 'un,  
Thinking every one beneath her ;  
Bring a wife with proper notions,  
One as won't mind taking trouble,  
One as won't mind running errands !”

Winking, answered Drop o' Wather,  
“ In the lane of dirty Drury  
Lives the tassel-maker's daughter,  
Minnie Harper, Frisky-Whisky,  
Handsomest of all young women ;  
I will bring her to our lodging,  
She shall run of all your errands,

Be your right-hand in all matters,  
Be the comfort of our household."

Thus departed Drop o' Wather  
To the lane of dirty Drury,  
To the lane of handsome women ;  
So he thought it, since she lived there,  
She, the girl he found so 'witching,  
She, his "Gramachree," his sweet-heart.

With his ankle-boots so jemmy,  
At each step three feet he measured ;  
Yet the way seemed long before him,  
And his heart outran his footsteps ;  
And he hastened without stopping  
Till he saw the shop-front window,  
Saw the shop of Mister Harper,  
Where she dwelt, the blue-eyed beauty.  
"Pleasant is the sight," he murmured,  
"Pleasant looks the place that lures me."

At the corner of a turning  
Stood a mercer's, bright displaying  
Rows of ribbons, every colour,  
Caught the eye of Drop o' Wather ;  
To the man he quick said, "Three yards !"  
To the smartest pointing, "That one !"

Had it rolled up in a parcel,  
Neatly rolled in thinnish paper,  
Placed the gift in his breast-pocket,  
And went forward without stopping.

At the doorway of his warehouse  
Stood the bald old tassel-maker,  
In the lane of dirty Drury,  
Selling tassel-bows of leather,  
Tassel-bows for umberellas.  
And inside, all over dimples,  
Sat the giggling Minnie Harper,  
Sat his daughter, Frisky-Whisky,  
Knitting cuffs of wool, bright scarlet ;  
Of his cash the old man's thoughts were,  
And the damsel's of flirtation.

He was thinking, as he sat there,  
Of the days when leather tassels  
Sold for much more than they now did ;  
How the beau, the Maccaroni,  
Decked his cane with nothing else then ;  
How it was the rage, the fashion,  
How it took, and pleased all parties,  
How they came to buy his tassels,  
Couldn't live without his tassels.

Ah, no more such tasteful dandies  
Could be found in town as they were!  
Now the men were more like rustics,  
Only had their sticks for using!

She was thinking of a young man,  
Seemed of th' Emerald Isle a native,  
Brisk, and smart, and very comely,  
Who, one afternoon, awhile back,  
Came to buy her father's tassels,  
Sat and rested by the counter,  
Loitered long about the doorway,  
Looking back as he departed.  
She had heard her father praise him,  
Praise his knowingness and sharpness;  
Would he come again for tassels  
To the shop of Mister Harper?  
On her knee her hands lay idle,  
And her eyes were fixed on nothing.

Down the lane came on a footstep,  
Came a footstep nimbly onwards;  
With a flower in his button,  
With his hat cocked o'er one shoulder,  
Suddenly upon the pavement  
Drop o' Wather stood before them.

Straight the bald old tassel-maker  
Looked up to see who it was there,  
Stood aside to let him pass in,  
Bade him enter at the doorway,  
Saying, as he shook hands with him,  
“ Drop o' Wather ! Glad to see you ! ”

In the hand of Frisky-Whisky  
Drop o' Wather placed his parcel,  
Drew the ribbon from his bosom ;  
And the damsel looked up at him,  
Looked up from her scarlet knitting,  
Said with dimpling simpering accent,  
“ Glad to see you, Drop o' Wather ! ”

Then she got up, Frisky-Whisky,  
From her seat, Miss Minnie Harper,  
Put aside her scarlet knitting,  
(Harper asked him in to supper,)  
Laid the cloth, and set the table,  
Brought a dish of piping-hot meat,  
Tender beaf-steak fried with onions,  
Gave them ale in pot of pewter,  
Gave them spirits and hot water,  
Mixed her father's favourite liquor,  
Mixed it sweet, and strong, and plenty,

Peeled a lemon very thinly,  
Put some in, then squeezed the juice to't,  
Brought out pipes, and filled their bowls full,  
Listened while the guest was speaking,  
Listened while her father answered,  
But not once her lips she opened,  
Not a single word she uttered.

Yes, she thus demurely listened  
To the words of Droppo' Wather,  
As he talked of mother Norah,  
Who was such a good old creature,  
As he told of his companions,  
Chinny-panpipes, the musician,  
And the very strong man, Queershin,  
How they'd fun, and life, and pleasure,  
In the alley where he hung out,  
In the jolly place he lived at.

“ You've been many years in business,  
Many years been hoarding, screwing,  
Must be now a warm old codger,  
Worth a precious sight of shiners.”  
Thus said gaily Droppo' Wather,  
Slapping Mister Harper's shoulder,  
“ Come now, old buck! Come, what say you?”

I'm a son-in-law as likely  
As you'll meet on summer's morning,  
Give me for my wife your daughter,  
Minnie Harper, Frisky-Whisky,  
Prettiest lass in lane of Drury!"

Then the bald old tassel-maker  
Puffed a moment ere he answered,  
Smoked a little while in silence,  
Looked at Drop o' Wather shrewdly,  
Stole a look at Frisky-Whisky,  
Then made answer very primly,  
"Yes, if Minnie Harper wishes;  
Speak yourself, girl, Minnie Harper!"

And the blue-eyed Frisky-Whisky  
Seemed more blue-eyed as she stood there,  
Though her blue eyes were cast downward;  
Bashful turned from Drop o' Wather,  
Softly, lisped she out the sentence,  
Giggled, blushed, and dropped a curtsy,  
"If you like, sir, be my husband!"

This was Drop o' Wather's wooing!  
Thus it was he won the daughter  
Of the bald old tassel-maker,  
In the lane of dirty Drury!



## VII.

## Drop o' Wather's Wedding.

You shall hear how Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
How the stylish Thimblerrigger  
Danced at Drop o' Wather's wedding ;  
How the cheerful Chinny-panpipes,  
He the best of street musicians  
Played his ballads and his love-songs ;  
How Jack Longbow, the great talker,  
He the wonderful yarn-spinner,  
Spun his yarns fit for marines' ear,  
Pleased the guests that were invited,  
Made the party pass off gaily,  
Made them gape and stare like winking.

Jolly was the wedding-dinner  
Served at Drop o' Wather's wedding,  
Leg of mutton, boiled, with turnips,  
Greens and carrots for side dishes,

Round of baked beef at the bottom,  
Pies and puddings to come after,  
Cheese and onions to wind up with,  
And no end of tip-top liquors.

Each acquaintance, everybody  
Known to them throughout the alley,  
Had a pressing invitation ;  
Early dinner, spend the evening,  
Make a day on't to the utmost.  
And the wedding guests assembled,  
Clothed in all their best for Sundays,  
Gowns of silk, and caps with flowers,  
Coats of cloth, not working-jackets,  
Quite full-dressed, both men and women.

And when dinner was all finished,  
Mother Norah, not yet tipsy,  
Ordered in the pipes and spittoons,  
Set the elders down in comfort,  
Set the young ones loudly laughing,  
Set afoot all kinds of frolic,  
Blindman's-Buff, and Hunt-the-slipper.

Then she said, " Come, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Dance for us your famous hornpipe,  
Dance the hornpipe, now, to please us,

That the guests may be more merry,  
That the day may pass off gaily,  
That we all may be delighted !”

Then the nobby Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
He the stylish Thimblerrigger,  
He the clever sleight-of-hander,  
Whom some people called the Black-leg,  
Rose among the guests assembled.

Skilled he was in sports and pastimes,  
In the hornpipe, named the Sailor's,  
In all games of chance, or cunning ;  
Skilled was he in chicken-hazard,  
Cards, and dice, of all description,  
Vingt-et-un, with pool and counters,  
Rouge-et-Noir, the game of sharpers.

Though the men would call him Swindler,  
Scamp, and Raff, and such-like titles,  
Little heeded he their sneering,  
Little cared he for their chaffing ;  
For the women and the damsels  
Favoured stylish Paw-Paw-Keeneyes.

He was dressed in shirt of cotton,  
Figured large, with pattern showy,  
All stuck down with studs bright gilded ;

He was dressed in white duck trousers,  
Like a cockney out a-boating ;  
And he wore his shoes low-quartered,  
Tied with bows and ends that floated ;  
On his head was perched a straw hat,  
With blue ribbon knotted round it,  
In his hand he had a switch-cane,  
And a ring upon his finger.

Then he danced his famous hornpipe,  
Famous hornpipe, called the Sailor's,  
Often danced in after-pieces  
At the Royal Minor Theatres,  
By the river Big-Thame-Water.  
Now he folded arms, and started,  
Keeping head and shoulders leaning  
Very backward, and on one side ;  
Now he stamped thrice, when returning  
To the place that he began from :  
Now he circled round the flooring ;  
Now he came down, right straight forward,  
Spreading wide his arms and legs out,  
Like a wind-mill with its sails up,  
Or an X, that shuts and opens  
Like those tongs for lazy people,

Made to reach things from a distance ;  
Now he toe-and-heeled it neatly,  
Rocking like a tumbler-figure,  
(Dumpy toy with rounded bottom) :  
Now he pointed foot, the right one,  
Now he pointed foot, the left one,  
Smartly, deftly, both alternate ;  
Now he came up pat in true time,  
Stamping thrice to mark the measure,  
When he'd backed to place of starting ;  
Lastly, snatching swift his hat off,  
Made a bow, and scraped behind him,  
In a way to make the women  
Dote upon him more than ever.

Thus the madcap Paw-Paw-Keeneyes  
Danced his hornpipe, then, to please them,  
And, light laughing, sat down panting,  
There among the guests assembled,  
Sat and laughed, while two young damsels  
Fanned him, sweetly smiling on him.

Then they said to Chinny-panpipes,  
To the friend of Dropp o' Wather,  
To the constantest of grinders,  
He the best of street musicians,

“ Play to us ; come, Chinny-panpipes,  
Play your ballads, and your love-songs,  
Tune up something to amuse us,  
That the party pass off gaily,  
That we all may be delighted.”

And the cheerful Chinny-panpipes  
Played with sentiment and feeling,  
Played with genuine true expression,  
Tune with words he thought appropriate ;  
Looking straight at Drop o' Wather,  
And askance at Frisky-Whisky,  
Played and sang he in this fashion :

“ O my joy ! my winsome honey !  
I could sip thee as a bee does,  
I would sip thy lip's sweet fragrance,  
As he sips it from the flower !

“ O my joy ! my lightsome birdie !  
I could catch thee as a net does,  
I would wrap thee in my arms close,  
As the net the bird it catches !

“ O my joy ! my darling charmer !  
I will prize thee more than riches,  
More than jewels, gold, or treasure,  
Best of treasures, my own wifey !”

Thus the cheerful Chinny-panpipes  
Played and sang at his friend's wedding ;  
And Jack Longbow, the great talker,  
He the wonderful yarn-spinner,  
Being called on by old Norah,  
Jealous of the street musician,  
Jealous of the applause they gave him,  
Saw in all the faces round him,  
Saw, or thought he saw, the tokens  
That the wedding guests assembled  
Longed to hear his lying stories,  
His unconscionable bouncers.

Very bumptious was Jack Longbow ;  
Never heard he taradiddle,  
But he capped it with a greater ;  
Never any tale of darkness,  
But he trumped it with a darker ;  
Never any queer rum story,  
But instantly told a rummer.

Would you credit all his vaunting,  
Would you but seem to believe him,  
No one ever knew such marvels,  
Half such curious things as he knew,  
Half such glaring travellers'-wonders

As this barefaced old Jack Longbow,  
As this villanous old fibber,  
Spinning yarns befitting only  
To be told to the marines' ear.

Thus his name became a by-word,  
And a jest among the people ;  
And whene'er a boastful talker  
Bragged of what he'd seen or heard tell,  
Or a speaker, speaking largely,  
More than any one could swallow,  
All who heard, would cry, " A Longbow !  
Oh ! You're coming now a Longbow !"

But because it might amuse them,  
They, the guests at her son's wedding,  
Norah bade this old yarn-spinner,  
Tell them one of his fine stories ;  
And she said, " Come, good Jack Longbow,  
Tell us now a tale of horror,  
Tell us something very fearful,  
Something that will make our flesh creep,  
Make our hair stand right on end, sir,  
Just to make the party pleasant,  
Just to pass the time off gaily,  
And our guests be more delighted !"



And Jack Longbow answered straightway,  
"You shall hear a tale of horror,  
Something very very fearful,  
Something that shall make your flesh creep,  
Make your hair stand right on end, ma'am,  
That shall brighten up the party,  
Brighten up this happy party,  
And shall make it still more happy.  
Listen, then (first fill my glass up),  
Listen while I tell you truly,  
How was seen an apparition  
At the Star and Garter Tavern."

## VIII.

## The Ghost of the Star and Garter.

CAN it be the rum descending  
In that glass of pure spring water?  
Yes, it is the rum descending,  
Sinking down into the water,  
Staining all the drink with crimson,  
With the crimson of the spirit,  
Turning all the white to splendour,  
Splendour of the old Jamaica;  
Ay, the grog is coloured deeply,  
All the water flushed with crimson!

This, with joy, beheld Jack Longbow,  
As he took a swig, to taste it;  
And he smacked his lips, and leering,  
With a wink, and nod, he cried out,  
“ See the strength of this here grog, mates !  
I'll be blest if 'ta'n't much stiffer

Than your punch, your famous cold-punch,  
 Drunk with white-bait, down at Blackwall,  
 Down the river,—which reminds me,  
 That I promised you a story,  
 Story of an apparition  
 At the Star-and-Garter Tavern  
 On the lovely hill of Richmond,—  
 Which a'n't down, but up the river ;  
 That's all one ! It did remind me.

“ Well then,—here goes,—once upon a  
 Time, as I've heard, lived a covey,  
 Dashing covey, named Youseenow ;  
 Broken-fortuned, out at elbows,  
 Always borrowing, never paying,  
 Always lived on other's money.

“ Ah, but beautiful and noble  
 Was the spirit of Youseenow !  
 He loved dearly to go to the  
 Star-and-Garter, star of Richmond,  
 Star of spreads, and rare good dinners !  
 He'd the spirit of a prince, for  
 Though he had no ready rhino,  
 Yet he would give treats at Richmond,  
 Trusting that he'd get somebody

To be kind enough to aid him,  
Friend to lend, or host to trust him.

“ And his cronies, those he treated,  
Jolly fellows, lads of mettle,  
Jolly fellows, full of spirit,  
Spirit like his own for scorning  
Money-troubles, money-carkings,  
How to earn, or how to reckon,  
How to pay, or how to settle,  
Only cared for jest and laughter,  
Only cared for feasting, drinking,  
Only cared for rare good living,  
Always happy with Youseenow !

“ Once to some rich spread invited,  
Up the river, in a wherry,  
Went together these good fellows,  
Altogether ten in party ;  
At their head the gay Youseenow,  
Giver of the feast in question ;  
All the cronies chatted gaily,  
Not one of them could be silent.

“ At the tavern stopped Youseenow,  
Rubbed his hands with glee expectant,  
Entered in the open doorway

Of the Star-and-Garter Tavern,  
 Of the famous star of Richmond,  
 And they heard him saying loudly,  
 ‘Now, look sharp! I’ve ordered dinner;  
 Written down from town beforehand.’  
 ‘Yes, sir!’ said the glib head waiter,  
 ‘Quite right! Dinner for eleven!’  
 ‘That’s the ticket!’ cried Youseenow,  
 ‘Tell the cook, the slap-up old ’un,  
 With my compts, he’s not to stumble;  
 Or I’ll wring his neck and spit him!’  
 And they roared until the tavern  
 Rang with their outrageous laughter.

“Then the party, through the window,  
 Looked out on the groups of people,  
 People out for day’s enjoyment;  
 Saw them pass in knots and couples,  
 Now a young girl with an old man,  
 Wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly;  
 Now an old dame with a young man,  
 Tall and straight, and strong and handsome.

“Gay Youseenow and his party  
 All made game of youth and beauty  
 Thus consorted with their contrasts;

Mocked the wretched weak old people  
Thus complacent, tottering onward,  
Wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly !  
And the treater and the treated  
Roared until the echoing tavern  
Rang with their outrageous laughter.

“ Then Youseenow turned from window,  
For the dinner was on table,  
Took the head, and did the honours,  
Placed two friends on each side of him,  
One of them, his name was Winter,  
And the other, Ninian Moucher ;  
Welcomed them with words of gladness,  
How rejoiced he felt to have them  
Sitting with him down to dinner  
At the famous Star-and-Garter,  
Famous tavern, Star of Richmond.

“ High in spirits, topping spirits,  
At the banquet sat Youseenow ;  
None so merry, none so happy,  
None so joyful as Youseenow.  
Hardly food or drink he tasted,  
Hardly could he think or listen,  
So intent was he, presiding,

Grandly, graciously, presiding,  
 At the feast he gave so bounteous,  
 With the cash he'd not provided.

“ So he made a speech of flourish,  
 Full of hospitable proffer,  
 Full of eloquent encomium  
 On the cook's art gastronomic,  
 Praised the dishes, top and side ones,  
 Praised them one and all for flavour,  
 Praised them severally, singly,  
 Praised them in the lump together,  
 But he praised, above all others,  
 Noble, glorious, English Roast Beef.

“ ‘Taste the dish that stands before you :  
 It is nourishing and goodly,  
 It is plain, yet rich in merit,  
 It is simple, yet 'tis sterling,  
 It is solid, stately, royal,  
 It will make a man twice manful.  
 All your pots, and all your kettles,  
 All your boiling, and your seething,  
 Serve but meat to spoil and sodden ;  
 Give me roast meat, roast with fire,  
 Fine Roast Beef, the Dish of Britons !

“ ‘ Now, my friends, we'll toast the women,  
Women, our delights and treasures !  
Women, our best friends and teachers,  
Women, softeners of man's hardness,  
Women, who, to grave from cradle,  
Are his comforts, chief sustainers ;  
Come, my boys, I'll give you, Woman !  
Here's the crown of blessings,—Woman !”

“ Then the room began to waver,  
Waver like a staggered boxer,  
And they felt it gliding, gliding,  
Like a moving panorama ;  
From their sight it seemed to vanish  
Meltingly, as if 'twere vapour ;  
Then it seemed to slide beneath them,  
Then to come back firm and steady,  
Then again to be departing,  
Walls, and floor, and ceiling, smoothly,  
With unstable sidelong motion.  
And behold ! the china dishes,  
Glasses, plates, they all seemed double !  
And behold ! the wine decanters  
Seemed all swerving, swaying, rocking !  
And the gilt poles of the curtains



Seemed to bend with threatening aspect  
In the eyes that could not fix them,  
In the guests' eyes, heavy, drooping,  
Eyes that reeled, and swam inebriate ;  
Tongues that split in two each sentence,  
Tongues that halved each word they uttered.

“Then Youseenow stared around him,  
Stared with glazy, drunken goggle ;  
And he saw his ten companions  
Changed to birds of various feather,  
Some were parrots, some were magpies,  
Others peacocks, others cuckoos,  
And they hopped, and chirped, and twittered,  
Pruned and shook out all their feathers,  
Strutted in their showy plumage,  
And spread out their tails behind them.

“Thought he saw them there appearing  
In their true respective colours  
Parrots, ever babbling, prating,  
But repeating 'others' meanings ;  
Magpies, always chattering nonsense,  
Picking up a thievish living ;  
Peacocks, vain, and proud parading  
Glories not of their own making :

Cuckoos, vagabonds, still laying  
Eggs of parasitic purpose  
In the nests and homes of others.

“Thought he heard a voice now saying,  
‘There, Youseenow! There, behold them,  
These associates you have chosen!  
Look what worthless creatures they are!  
Put them in a cage of iron,  
In that giant cage of iron;  
Hang the cage up, on the island  
Not far off from here, the island  
Called Eelpie, just over yonder,  
Yonder in the Big-Thame-Water.’

“Thought he saw the transformed dickies,  
All the birds with showy feathers  
Shut up in a cage gigantic,  
Which was then, by magic power,  
Swift transported through the window,  
And himself, the gay Youseenow,  
Wafted sudden, following after,  
Held by unseen hands, and wafted  
Straight across the fields and meadows,  
Straight across the flowing river,  
Till he rested on the island,

Eelpie Island, green and grassy,  
In the midst of Big-Thame-Water.

“ Thought that then a ghostly figure  
In his hands placed bow and arrow ;  
Bade him shoot, in voice of thunder,  
Bade him shoot the transformed dickies,  
One by one, caged there in iron,  
Till they all fell dead as muttons.  
Then he saw the ghostly figure  
Standing motionless beside him ;  
It was tall, and dim, and spectral,  
Tall as tallest tree of poplar ;  
It was grim as murky shadow  
Creeping through a twilight cavern ;  
It was grim, and dark in menace,  
As a stormy midnight ocean ;  
It had eyes as sad and mournful  
As the eyes of weeping mother,  
Weeping for her children’s errors ;  
It had hands as cold as marble,  
One of which touched gay Youseenow’s,  
For an instant, as the thundered  
Words once more were loud repeated :  
‘ Shoot those birds, those birds transfigured !

Shoot your friends, your vile companions !  
Shoot them dead when I command you !'

“Thought he took, all of a tremble,  
Bow in hand, and fixed an arrow ;  
Raised it, shaking, drew it, shaking,  
Drew it with an aim unsteady.  
But it twanged, with sound ill-omened,  
Shot with fatal force and deadly,  
Pierced the heart of each bird caged there,  
Smote them down one after t'other ;  
There they lay all red and gory,  
There they lay all prostrate, bleeding,  
Till their life-blood streamed forth, flooding  
All the ground about Youseenow.  
Then he thought he had to strike out  
In the blood of his companions ;  
Swim for very life he had to,  
In the life-blood of his dear friends !  
Sudden woke he with the horror,  
Horror of the apparition ;  
Woke to find himself prone lying  
On the floor, beneath the table,  
At the Star-and-Garter Tavern.”

When the story was concluded,

When the ghostly tale was ended,  
 Looking round upon his audience,  
 Meaningly Jack Longbow added,  
 "There are folks, that I have known, sirs,  
 Who pretend they don't believe in  
 Ghostuses and such-like creaturs ;  
 But I'd have 'em know they'd best not  
 Laugh at things that's much beyond 'em.  
 This, at least, I just will tell 'em,  
 I don't stand no sort of gammon."

To the wedding guests' amusement  
 Thus he wound up his fine story ;  
 But they smiled and they applauded,  
 While they whispered to each other,  
 "Does he hint at us, I wonder ?  
 Mean that we're the 'folks' he talks of?"

Then again sang Chinny-panpipes,  
 Played and sang a damsel's love-song,  
 Ground it on his grinding-organ,  
 Spoke the words more than he sang them ;  
 'Twas a lass's lamentation  
 For her lover, her Hal Tomkins.

"When I think of my dear fellow,  
 Heigh-ho ! think of my dear fellow,

Back to him my heart is flying,  
O my sweetheart, my Hal Tomkins !

“ Heigh-ho ! when I parted from him,  
Round my neck he hung a sixpence,  
True-love pledge, a broken sixpence,  
O my sweetheart, my Hal Tomkins !

“ I will go with you, he whispered,  
Heigh-ho ! to your native village,  
Let me go with you, he whispered,  
O my sweetheart, my Hal Tomkins !

“ Far away, away, I answered,  
Very far indeed, I answered,  
Heigh-ho ! is my native village,  
O my sweetheart, my Hal Tomkins !

“ When I looked back from the waggon,  
That was taking me far from him,  
After me he still was looking,  
O my sweetheart, my Hal Tomkins !

“ By the Inn he still was standing,  
By the Waggon Inn was standing,  
Very sad upon the pathway,  
O my sweetheart, my Hal Tomkins !

“ When I think of my dear fellow,  
Heigh-ho ! think of my dear fellow,

Back to him my heart is flying,  
O my sweetheart, my Hal Tomkins !”

Such was Drop o’ Wather’s Wedding,  
Such the dance of Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Such the story of Jack Longbow,  
Such the songs of Chinny-panpipes ;  
Thus the wedding dinner ended,  
And the wedding guests departed,  
Leaving Drop o’ Wather cosey  
With his bride, his Minnie Wather.

## IX.

## Bilking the Runners.

SING, O Song of Drop o' Wather,  
Of the troubled days that followed,  
In the crowded narrow alley,  
In the alley densely peopled !  
Sing the adventures of Bob Dabbin,  
Sing the Bilking of the Runners.

Quiet had been all the quarter,  
Quiet from police intrusion ;  
Quiet from their hostile visit,  
Constables were nigh forgotten.  
There was peace throughout the alley ;  
Unmolested roved the hunters,  
Fogle-hunters, belcher-nimmers,  
Twitched the wipe from out the pocket,  
Did the trick, and 'scaped the beadles.  
Unmolested worked the women,  
Picked the marks from wipes and fogles,



Kept the melting-pot all ready,  
Hid the swag, and shared the plunder.  
Round about the lucky alley,  
Unsuspecting still, the Runners,  
Greenly they beheld Bob Dabbin  
Duck-and-drake his yellow shiners,  
Living like a chap who'd plenty.  
Till at last, one day in Spring-time,  
Something chanced to draw their notice  
To the doings of Bob Dabbin ;  
And they watched him close till Autumn,  
Watched how he made such a harvest ;  
Thought they'd now found out Bob Dabbin,  
One of Drop o' Wather's cronies.

Once, a prime plant being afoot then,  
Drop o' Wather, grave and thoughtful,  
Spoke and said to Minnie Wather,  
To his wife, his Frisky-Whisky,  
You shall bilk to-night the Runners,  
Bow-street Runners, Traps, those scoundrels  
Sent and bent on our destruction ;  
Blast of footpad, blight of cracksman,  
Townsend, noted chief of Runners,  
Townsend, he who nabs mis-doers.

“In the night, when all is silence,  
In the night, when all is darkness,  
When the Spirit of Sleep, Snugsnoozem,  
Shuts the doors of all the lodgers,  
So that not an ear can hear you,  
So that not an eye can see you,  
Rise up from your bed in silence,  
Put your feet in your list slippers,  
Walk down stairs, as if on egg-shells,  
Watch if you spy trace of Runners  
Skulking anywhere about, girl.

Thus the Runners shall be thwarted,  
And their mischief be prevented,  
If belike they're plotting any;  
So that neither Trap nor Runner,  
Neither Bow-street rogue nor rascal,  
Shall come near our peaceful quarters,  
Unawares, or unexpected.

No, not he, that shrewd Thief-Taker,  
Not that sharp old file from Bow-street,  
Not that mighty Trap Top-sawyer,  
Not himself, the famous Townsend,  
King of the Constabulary!

On a house-top lurked the Runners,

Lurked the hungry Traps and Runners,  
Townsend, he, the King of Runners,  
With his band of black marauders.  
And they peered at Drop ó' Wather,  
O'er the parapet of house-top,  
Where they lurked (the house was empty,  
House to let, they occupied it);  
“Watch him!” said they; “Watch that 'ere  
man!

He's a pal of him we're after.”

When the noiseless night descended,  
Broad and dark o'er all the alley,  
When the drowsy watchman, Charley,  
Cried the hour, amidst his napping,  
And the Spirit of Sleep, Snugsnoozem,  
Shut the doors of all the lodgers,  
Out crept Minnie, only in her ——  
I won't say what (it was not *frock*)—  
Out she crept into the darkness,  
Wakened up, in start affrighted,  
(Hadn't time to put her gown on)  
By a noise she fancied Runners,  
Runners come to seek her husband.  
No one but the Night-sky only

Caught a glimpse of her in passing,  
No one, not e'en watchman Charley,  
Saw her in that awkward moment;  
Duskylaw, the darkness, wrapped her  
In his decent cloak of shadow,  
Till she went back to her chamber,  
Safe to chamber, and to bed too.

But next morning, soon as day dawned,  
Townsend, he, the King of Runners,  
Gathered all his black marauders,  
Gang of followers, traps, and bailiffs,  
From the house with dirty house-top,  
Came at once, quite bold and brazen,  
Straight to Drop o' Wather's lodging,  
Asking where he'd hid Bob Dabbin.

"We will drag Bob Dabbin," said they,  
"From the hole where he lies hidden,  
Spite of all the shifts and dodges  
You and yours can say or swear to,  
Spite of all the feints and fetches  
You or Mistress Wather's up to."

But the wary Drop o' Wather,  
Ever on his guard 'gainst lagging,  
Had descried the peering watchers,

When they watched him from the house-top.  
“Asy, now! my friends the Runners!  
Townsend, you, my King of Runners!  
I will teach you all a lesson  
That shall not be soon forgotten!”

On the day before, securely,  
He had sent in all directions  
Scouts to warn his friend, Bob Dabbin  
Of the nearness of the Runners,  
Of the gang of black marauders,  
That were lying there in ambush  
In the neighbouring house (thought empty)  
Waiting to surprise Bob Dabbin,  
Waiting there to seize and nab him.

When they came with tip-staff clamour,  
Bawling loudly, asking bluffly,  
In their vulgar, brutal fashion,  
Just like overbearing Runners,  
Armed with legal form, Beak's order,  
For the body of Bob Dabbin,  
They found all their craft and cunning,  
All their deep-laid wiles of lagging,  
Set aside by deeper-laid ones,  
Found that they were clearly done for,

Done, and bilked, and choused, and chiseled,  
Of their prey by Drop o' Wather.

On his hearth, there calmly stood he,  
Looking scornfully upon them ;  
And so haughty was his aspect,  
That he might have passed for guiltless.  
Without mercy he sneered at them,  
Spoke them fair, and quite politely,  
Talked these wretched bodies breathless,  
Treated these bewildered scarecrows,  
These constabulary Runners,  
As though they'd been worthy people,  
Gentlemen, respected persons.

Only Townsend, he, the leader,  
Townsend, he, the King of Runners,  
He alone was treated frankly,  
As superior to his people.

With unsparing tongue he lashed him,  
Told him roundly what he thought him,  
Called him all the names he could do,  
Rascal, scoundrel, biggest blackguard.

“Townsend, you, my Runner !” said he,  
“You, the leader of these villains,  
You, the plotter of this insult,

The conductor of this outrage,  
Mind how you come here again, sir !  
See if I don't finely trounce you !  
Mind ! you're on your good behaviour !”

And he pointed, with a sleeve-grin,  
To the door, and showed him out on't,  
Showed him out, the baffled Townsend,  
Muttering surly his displeasure,  
Clapping on his low-crowned beaver,  
Calling on his men to follow,  
Calling sharply on his people.

Then deaf Norah, the old woman,  
And her son's wife, Minnie Wather,  
And the neighbours who were friendly,  
Those who knew what had been passing,  
All rejoiced they'd bilked the Runners ;  
All were glad that young Bob Dabbin  
Made his lucky, safe from lagging,  
Safe from Stone-Jug, or the Treadmill.

## X.

## Paw-Paw-Keeneyes.

YOU shall hear how Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
He, the stylish Thimblerrigger,  
Whom some people called the Black-leg,  
Vexed the alley with disturbance ;  
You shall hear of all his mischief,  
And his flight from Drop o' Wather,  
And his feline hide-and-seeking,  
And what came of his adventures.

On the skirts of Bedford Bury,  
In the court of Nogo-would-you,  
Near the river, Big-Thame-Water,  
Stood the ken of Paw-Paw-Keeneyes.  
It was he who came invited  
From the court of Nogo-would-you,  
When, among the guests assembled,  
He so merrily and madly



Danced at Drop o' Wather's wedding,  
Danced the hornpipe there to please them.

Now, in search of fresh adventures,  
From his ken went Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Came in haste unto the alley,  
Found some idle lads assembled  
At the crib of old Jack Longbow,  
Listening to his stunning crammers,  
His prodigious travellers'-wonders.

He was telling them the story  
Of Highjig, the Tightrope-Dancer,  
How he bounded up to heaven,  
How he almost touched at heaven,  
As he danced upon the tightrope,  
The elastic, springy tightrope ;  
How the others first essayed it,  
How the Pantaloon and Clown, too,  
Tried in turn the great achievement,  
Mounting rashly on the summit,  
Sought to hit against the heavens,  
Sought the sky to smite with forehead,  
Neared the sky, but could not reach it ;  
How the Harlequin, upclimbing,  
Made him ready for the trial,

Took the pole in hand, and balanced,  
Made a spring up like a cricket.

“Once he leaped,” said old Jack Longbow,  
“Once he leaped, and lo, beneath him  
Bent the rope like India-rubber  
When 'tis pulled, and then let go, sirs;  
Twice he leaped, and lo, beneath him  
Cracked the rope, as if 'twere broken,  
Well-nigh letting him down tumble!  
Thrice he leaped, and lo, above him  
Burst the sky, the sky of canvas,  
And he disappeared right through it;  
And Highjig, the Tightrope-Dancer  
With one bolt went in behind him!”

“Harkee!” shouted Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
As he entered at the doorway,  
“I am sick of all this twaddle,  
Sick of old Jack Longbow's bouncers,  
Sick of Drop o' Wather's cunning.  
Here is something to amuse you,  
Better than this cust palaver.”

Then from out his right coat-pocket  
Forth he drew, with solemn winking,  
Painted board, with pools and counters,

To the regions of the New World,  
Of the Bay entitled Bot'ny,  
To the Island of New Holland,  
To another "New" New South Wales,  
To the land of hope, Australia!



Pope Joan board, with pack of cards, too,  
Green on one side, closely speckled,  
Parti-coloured on the other ;  
Four robed kings, with legs half hidden,  
Four fat knaves, with legs a-straddle,  
Ace of clubs, and one of di'monds,  
Ace of spades, and red heart tender,  
Four sweet queens, each holding flower ;  
These were what were called the court-cards.  
All were made of pasteboard, printed  
In their several two-fold colours,  
One half scarlet, richly burnished,  
And a bright jet black the other.

In the centre pool collected,  
Were the stakes of all the players ;  
Then he dressed the board all round it,  
Putting counters in and fishes,  
Into all the pools divergent,  
Thus expounding and explaining :  
“ First I deal out cards to each one,  
Leaving some to make the stops with ;  
Next we play, and playing call out  
What's the card we've in rotation,  
Till the suit is followed fully.

Then he pointed to the small pools  
In which lay the fish and counters,  
Pointed to th' inscriptions on them,  
Still expounding and explaining :  
“ That, you see, is ‘ Matrimony,’  
If you get the king and queen both,  
You're entitled to those counters ;  
That, you see's ‘ Intrigue,’ and meaning  
Knave and queen produced together ;  
If you get the nine of di'monds,  
You take ‘ Pope,’ the pool of ‘ Pope Joan.’ ”

Thus he showed the famous round-game,  
Thus expounded and explained it,  
Taught the idle lads to play it,  
Taught them how to dearly like it,  
Twenty eager eyes fixed on him,  
Full of gambling fever, on him.

“ Lots o' games,” said old Jack Longbow,  
Lots o' games I've seen in my time ;  
Blesh ye ! Up to games all manner,  
Ay, no end o' games I'm up to !  
He as thinks to beat Jack Longbow  
Must be precious nimble-witted ;  
Yes, for all you're thought so clever,

I can whack you, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
(I, who'm such a hand at whackers !)  
At your game with Pools and Counters."

So they sat and gamed together,  
The old man, and idle young ones ;  
Played for pennies, shillings, half-crowns,  
Played all day, from early morning ;  
Played until the Thimblerrigger,  
Till the knavish Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Cleaned them out, won all their money,  
Won their watches, those who had them,  
Won their kerchiefs, waistcoats, jackets,  
Plucked and pigeoned them completely.  
Twenty eyes scowled glaring at him,  
Like a bullock's over-driven,  
As he turned and left the lodging,  
Lodging where he'd met the idlers,  
Lodging where lived old Jack Longbow.

Hot, and turned with his good fortune,  
Was the head of Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
As he came into the fresh air,  
From the close and stifled chamber.  
All the birds that hung in cages  
Sang, or chirped, or feebly whistled,

And the step of Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Danced to measure of their singing,  
As he walked along the alley,  
Where stood Drop o' Wather's lodging.

No one seemed to be at home there ;  
No one answered to his knocking ;  
When he rang, 'twas just the same thing,  
No one came the door to open ;  
Down he stooped, and peeped through key-  
hole,

Nothing could he see, or make out ;  
Listened, with his ear at key-hole,  
Nothing could he hear there, either ;  
Nothing but an old cock raven,  
Ralph, the croaking hoarse old raven,  
Who was croaking dull and lonely  
By himself, within the room there.

"All away ! The place is empty !"  
Thus exclaimed he, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
"Ripe for wanton spree and mischief,  
Out is Master Drop o' Wather,  
Out the gadding Frisky-Whisky,  
Out is Norah, the old woman,  
And the lodging's left unguarded !"



'Gainst the door he set his shoulder,  
With one wrench he burst it open,  
Entered in, and looked about him ;  
Wrang the neck of Ralph, the raven,  
Stopped its croaking, flung its body  
In the grate, among the ashes ;  
Seized with jealous whim and spiteful  
Towards the absent Drop o' Wather.

Rough and reckless, he continued ;  
Round the place, in wild disorder,  
Strewed the household things about him,  
Piled together in confusion  
Chips and shavings, pots and kettles,  
Clothes from drawers, and spoons from cup-  
boards.

Plates from rack, and coke from closet,  
Boots and shoes, and cups and saucers,  
As a scoff to Mother Norah,  
As a fling at Mistress Wather.

Then departed Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Whistling, humming through the alley,  
Whistling lightly to the damsels  
Looking out from upper windows,  
Nodding down a greeting at him,

Humming lightly to the cage-birds,  
Who from out their prison wicker  
Answered with a tune as merry.

Then he plunged into the purlieus  
Of the squalid Bedford Bury,  
Lost amidst their many turnings,  
Taking pleasure in the mischief  
He had done at Drop o' Wather's.

## XI.

## The Hunting of Paw-Paw-Keeneyes.

FULL of rage was Drop o' Wather  
When he came back to the alley.  
Found his lodging in confusion,  
Heard of all the pranks so wanton,  
All the spiteful tricks and mischief,  
Played him up by Paw-Paw-Keeneyes.

Hard he breathed like panting walrus,  
Puffed and blowed like stranded grampus,  
Through his nose he snuffed and snorted,  
Through his teeth he pished and grumbled,  
Hot and boiling like a kettle,  
Fuming, buzzing, like a blow-fly.

“ I will pay this Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Pay him out, this mischief-maker !  
Through the whole town I will hunt him,  
Hunt him down, like any mad-dog ;

I'll take care he sha'n't escape me,  
I'll be sure to chase and catch him !”

Then in anger off he started,  
At full speed went Drop o' Wather,  
Straight in search of Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Through Long-Acre, where he'd passed it,  
To the lodging where he'd slept at ;  
But he found not Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Only found the rumped bedclothes,  
Found the counterpane and blankets,  
On the bed which he had lain in,  
Bearing impress of his body.

From the court below there, fronting,  
Up towards the first-floor window,  
Paw-Paw-Keeneyes turning backward,  
Shook his fist, and thrust his tongue out,  
Made a face of larky mocking ;  
And loud shouted Drop o' Wather :  
“Through the whole town I will hunt you,  
Hunt you down, like any mad-dog ;  
I'll take care you sha'n't escape me,  
I'll be sure to chase and catch you !”

Down through streets, of streets all manner,  
Down through turnings, straight and crooked,

Ran the knavish Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Like a lamplighter he scampered,  
Till he came unto an area,  
In a narrow fetid alley,  
To an area deep and dingy,  
With begrimed stone steps down leading  
To a cellar dark, where Tom-Cats  
Haunted near a pool of water,  
Stagnant, knee-deep, foul and muddy;  
Where the damp, in stains and blotches,  
Blurred the wall behung with cobwebs.

On the top stood Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
On the top of area stone steps,  
At whose foot there lay the cellar.  
From the bottom rose a Tom-Cat,  
Glared with two great eyes of greenness,  
Eyes that seemed to put a poser  
To the stranger, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes.

On the top stood Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Looking down the dingy area,  
Looking at the darksome cellar,  
And he spoke unto the Tom-Cat,  
Smiled politely, took his hat off:  
"Friend Grimalkin, worthy Tom-Cat,

Dark and shady is that cellar ;  
Let me come into that cellar,  
Let me make, there, one among you ;  
Pray consider me a Tom-Cat."

Cautiously replied the Tom-Cat,  
With reserve he thus made answer :  
" Let me first consult the others,  
Let me ask the other Tom-Cats."

Down he stepped into the area,  
Velvetly he stepped, and noiseless,  
Down among the cats, his fellows,  
Black, and tabby, in the cellar.

On the top stood Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Kicking heels, and inly swearing,  
Swearing to be thus kept waiting ;  
Spat upon the steps below him,  
On the stone steps leading downward,  
Spat from rage and sheer vexation  
At delay, when time was precious ;  
Fell in flecks and showers from him,  
Fell in little shining patches  
On the grimy steps of area.

From the cellar rose the Tom-Cats,  
Miowing up the area stone steps,

One by one, and still another,  
Till the place seemed full of Tom-Cats,  
Full of grim and whiskered faces.

To the Tom-Cats, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Spoke with silky voice and wheedling :  
“ Very pleasant is your cellar,  
Gentlemen, and safe from danger,  
Could you kindly so contrive it,  
As to let me stay among you,  
Let me be awhile a Tom-Cat ? ”

“ Humph ! ” Grimalkin said, the Tom-Cat,  
King of Cats, a famous mouser,  
Wowling, prowling, nine-lived mouser,  
“ Just step down here, down among us,  
Down into our quiet cellar. ”

Down the area steps among them,  
Quickly whipped he, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes.  
Black became his shirt of cotton,  
Black his favourite white duck trousers,  
Black his broad coat-tails behind him,  
As they swept the filthy stone steps  
Leading to the Tom-Cats' cellar.

“ Hide me safe, ” said Paw-Paw-Keeneyes  
“ Hide me snug, and sure, and safely,

Safely here amongst you Tom-Cats."

"Ay," replied his friend Grimalkin,

"In our cellar we'll receive you,

Board and lodging we will find you ;

Make yourself at home, old fellow."

Thus invited, in he entered,  
More than willing, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes ;  
Found the cellar strewed all over  
With old casks, and kegs,—but empty ;  
Store of barrels, if he's thirsty,  
Rats and mice, in case he's hungry ;  
Found the cellar vaulted over,  
Damp and reeking, large, not airy.

Here they kept him safely hidden,  
Made him quite at home among them,  
Hospitably housed and welcomed ;  
Offered him to stay as long as  
He felt happy 'mong the Tom-Cats.

But not long did Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Stay in peace among the Tom-Cats ;  
For there came a voice of warning  
From the watchman at the station,  
Police station, or his watch-box,  
Crying, " Here comes Drop o' Wather !  
Drop o' Wather's out a-hunting !



Then they heard a call and clamour,  
 Heard a shouting and a tramping,  
 Heard a hooting and hallooing ;  
 And the streets there up above them  
 Rang with noise of coming people,  
 And they knew th' alarm was given.

Down the narrow street the comers  
 Poured, and rushed on helter-skelter ;  
 Sore affrighted with the uproar,  
 Flew the Tom-Cats hither, thither,  
 Hid themselves in darkest corners,  
 Darkest corners of the cellar ;  
 But the human Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
 Could not creep in holes and crannies ;  
 Much too big was he for getting  
 Into nooks behind the barrels.

Through the vaulted roof of cellar,  
 Through the pavement cellar-iron,  
 Down looked peeping Drop o' Wather :  
 " Ah ! I see you, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes !  
 There you are, you dirty spalpeen !  
 Well I know the trick you've sarved me,  
 Well I know your tongue of blarney ;  
 It's you I'm up to, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes !"

There stood fuming Drop o' Wather

On the top of area stone steps,  
With his bludgeon, Millemlikefun,  
Layed about him like a madman,  
With his bludgeon, his shillelagh,  
His good weapon, Millemlikefun,  
Whirled it round his head, and swung it,  
Like a thresher threshing barley,  
Vowed in smithereens he'd beat him,  
Paw-Paw-Keeneyes, when he came up.

Paw-Paw-Keeneyes heard the bawling,  
Knew the voice of Drop o' Wather ;  
Made a rush, and tried to spring up,  
Up the area steps and past him ;  
But the bludgeon met and struck him,  
Struck him on the head and knocked him  
Backward down the steep stone staircase.

All in vain did Paw-Paw-Keeneyes  
Struggle to regain his balance !  
Pitching over, stunned and breathless,  
Down he fell with all his weight, and  
Lay all bleeding in the area.  
Whirling round and round, bewildered,  
He beheld the area turning,  
Turning, all the crowd above him ;

Saw their faces coming nearer,  
 Saw them now receding farther,  
 Heard the voices dimmer, louder,  
 Heard the shout, the cruel laughter,  
 Sound alternate, dimly, loudly ;  
 Saw no more the crowd above him,  
 Only saw the ground beneath him ;  
 Dead away from mocking faces,  
 Dead away from shouting voices,  
 With a heavy sound and sullen,  
 Down he dropped,—his neck was broken !

Dead upon the area pavement  
 Lay the knavish Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
 Lay the stylish Thimblerrigger,  
 Killed through his own wanton folly.  
 Ended was his life of swindle,  
 Ended was his tricking, cheating,  
 Ended all his sleight-of-handing,  
 Ended all his pranks and mischief,  
 All his gambling, all his dancing,  
 All his flirting with the damsels.

Then the hero Drop o' Wather  
 Felt, for what he'd done, compunction ;  
 Spoke a speech unto the body,

Like an Irish howl, or rather,  
Like Prince Hal to Harry Percy,  
Hotspur, when he'd fought, and killed him ;  
Spoke and said : " Ah, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes !  
Now you're food for worms, my brave boy,  
Now you're done for, I am sorry !  
Why, my boy, och, why then did ye,  
Kick up such a dust and shindy,  
Shindy, honey, in our alley ?  
Ochone, murder ! Sure, it's me then,  
That you've bothered now entirely,  
Bothered now beyond conception.  
But I'm thinking, it's past grievin' ;  
So I'll whisht, and take it *asy*.  
Any how, I'll go home quiet,  
Quiet, dacent, home to Minnie ;  
See if she, the cratur, cannot,  
She, my Frisky-Whisky cannot  
Give me one kind drop o' comfort  
To console me for the loss of  
You I wail for, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes,  
Old acquaintance, Paw-Paw-Keeneyes !"

## XII.

*The Fate of Queershin:*

FAR and wide among the alleys  
Spread the name and fame of Queershin,  
First of tumblers, athletes, Queershin,  
First of acrobats was Queershin ;  
Nothing drew like feats of his'n,  
No street-show could come a-nigh him,  
No street-show brought half the money.  
And the jealous Punch-and-Judies,  
They the envious little Puppets,  
They the grudging Fantoccini,  
Plotted and conspired against him.

“ If this hateful Queershin,” said they,  
“ If this big, obnoxious fellow  
Goes on thus a little longer,  
Taking from us all our starers,  
Getting from us all our profits,

Keeps the world agape with wonder,  
What becomes of Punch-and-Judy?  
Who will care for Punch-and-Judy?  
He will cut us out, by jingo!  
Drive us all to desperation,  
Send us to the dogs in no time,  
To the cust' 'dimnition Bow-Wows,'  
To those dreads of Mantalini!"

So the furious little Puppets  
Laid their wooden heads together,  
How they might get rid of Queershin,  
Yes, get rid outright of Queershin,  
The attractive, too attractive  
Street-show rival, dangerous Queershin!

Now the greatest power of Queershin  
In his tendon lay snug seated,  
In his tendon, called "Achilles;"  
There alone could he be injured,  
Nothing else could so much harm him,  
Nothing throw him out of bread so.

Thus the worst thing that could happen,  
Was to break it, cut it, hamstring  
It by stealth, or force, or cunning,  
Hurt it somehow, make it useless.

This was Queershin's dearest treasure,  
Dearest of his sinews, muscles ;  
And the sly-boots little Puppets,  
Punch-and-Judies, knew the secret,  
Knew the surest way to maim him.

So they laid their heads together,  
Laid their wooden heads together,  
Close as blocks of wooden pavement  
In the thoroughfares of London,  
Deep consulting how to compass  
Their resolved and fixed intention  
To do for the strong man's tendon.  
Sly they lay in wait for Queershin,  
If they could but catch him napping,  
These malignant little Puppets.

'Twas one afternoon in August,  
Close and sultry all the air was,  
Not a breath, but on the river ;  
Shady side of street most welcome ;  
Ices were worth any money,  
Ices, whether cream or water ;  
Drowsy seemed the very houses  
With the heat and drought of summer.

Down by river-side the strong man,

Outside public-house sat Queershin,  
 Resting on a bench not far from  
 Where stands Hungerfordian Market,  
 Almost melting with the weather,  
 Almost dozing off, and snoring.

Lulled by overhanging sign-post,  
 Lulled by creaking, swinging sign-post,  
 Soon the Spirit of Sleep possessed him ;  
 Then those imps of darkness also,  
 Nightmare, Cramp, and Frightful Dreaming,  
 Came with Spirit of Sleep, Snugsnoozem ;  
 Like the broom-girl, Dutch, or German,  
 With their phantom brooms they swept by,  
 O'er the sleepy head of Queershin.

At his leg there seemed a plucking,  
 At his calves there felt a twitching,  
 At his ankles strange sensations,  
 At his insteps certain prickings ;  
 And he felt as if his tendon  
 Were assailed by sundry tuggings  
 Of the Cramp, that fiendish comer  
 With the Spirit of Sleep, Snugsnoozem,  
 Tuggings like the rack of torture.

At the first pluck and first twitching,



Queershin gave a snort and snuffle ;  
At the second visitation  
Queershin started, drew his leg up ;  
At the third, he snored still louder,  
Deeply snored, with mouth wide open ;  
Very sound asleep was Queershin.

Thus he sat by side of river,  
Fast asleep, at public-house door,  
Near to Hungerfordian Market,  
Till came by, as luck would have it,  
His sworn enemies, the Puppets,  
Puppet troop of Punch-and-Judy.

There they stood, with looks relentless,  
Picked up brick-bats, stones, and hurled them,  
Hurled them straight, right at his tendon,  
Struck it forcibly, and snapped it,  
Snapped it smack in two, and broke it,  
With a noise like shot of pistol.

“ Down with Queershin ! ” was the sudden  
Shout of all the wicked Puppets.

And he sideways sprawled and toppled  
Off the bench, down by the river,  
Nearly fell into the water,  
Headlong fell, quite topsy-turvy ;

And the wooden bench, upset too,  
Looked to shocking disadvantage,  
Bottom upward, like the sitter,—  
Nothing else was seen of Queershin.

Ever after that, the strong man  
Limped a lamester 'mong the people;  
And whenever through the alleys  
He came leaning on his crutch-stick,  
With his maimed tendon Achilles,  
Maimed, and mashed, and split asunder :  
“ Queershin !” cried they, “ that is Queershin !  
Once the Acrobat so famous !”

## XIII.

## Dropp o' Wather's Departure.

Now remains for me to tell of  
How he ended, Dropp o' Wather;  
What befell him, after all his  
Knowing doings in the course of  
His career, his life in London.  
He had run his rigs so clever,  
He had risked so very closely,  
He had just avoided Newgate,  
He had narrowly 'scaped hanging;  
And a dream he had one midnight,  
Brought him to a sense of danger.  
Thus he dreamed; 'twas really awful.

Not far off from Bedford Bury,  
By the muddy Big-Thame-Water,  
At the doorway of his lodging,  
Thought he stood one rainy morning,

Thought he stood there, lounging idly,  
 Watching fall the sooty raindrops  
 From the eaves and roofs of houses,  
 Watching fill the dirty puddles,  
 Splashed and speckled with the drizzle ;  
 Flowed in filthy streams the gutters,  
 Flowed the spouts, as they ran over ;  
 Pouring, pelting, came the shower.

Grey above him hung the heavens,  
 Sloppy spread the stones before him ;  
 Dully moping, sat the cage-birds,  
 Longing vainly for the sunshine ;  
 Had it been there in the alley,  
 Its reflection on the pavement  
 Would have shown but house-top shadows  
 In the wet and rainy surface.

On the brow of Drop o' Wather  
 Sat a gloomy scowl dejected ;  
 As a fog in mid-November,  
 As a fog like yellow blanket,  
 So hung brooding, like a shadow,  
 This thick cloud of dull foreboding,  
 As of one who in a vision

Sees what may be darkly coming,  
Stood and lounged there, Drop o' Wather.

Both his hands plunged in his pockets,  
Sunk his head between his shoulders,  
Fixed his eyes in vacant staring ;  
Fell the rain drops on his features,  
Specked with wet his naked nose-tip,  
All unheeded fell the drops on  
Eyes, and nose, and hatless noddle.

Through the alley, sudden, briskly,  
Something in the hazy distance,  
Something in the misty morning,  
Came along the dripping pavement,  
Now seemed hurrying, now seemed hasting,  
Coming nearer, nearer, nearer.

Was it Dingedong, the dustman ?  
Was it Twopenny, the postman ?  
Or the cobbler, Shoe-shoe-mender,  
Or the milkman, Water-well-it,  
With the raindrops dripping, dashing  
Profitably in the milk-cans ?

It was neither milkman, dustman,  
Cobbler, postman, none of those men,

Coming on that misty morning ;  
 But a set of sturdy fellows,  
 Fast advancing up the alley,  
 Striding, splashing through the raindrops,  
 Come with warrant strictly formal,  
 From the distant Police-office,  
 From Marlborough-street that morning,  
 Come with magistrate's command to  
 Apprehend and promptly take up  
 Drop o' Wather for his trial.

Then he thought he dreamed the scene of  
 His conviction, condemnation ;  
 How he saw the Court dense crowded,  
 Crowded with indignant faces ;  
 How he saw the dock, where he stood,  
 How he saw the bench, where Judge sat,  
 How he saw the box for Jury,  
 Where the twelve sat looking fateful ;  
 Saw the Judge rise up and cover  
 With black cap his hair of silver ;  
 Heard the word of solemn verdict,—  
 “ Guilty ! ” Words of fearful sentence,—  
 “ Hanged by neck,” and “ dead, dead, dead,”  
 last.

Thought he fainted quite away there,  
And was carried straight to Newgate ;  
In the dreary cell of felon,  
In condemned cell chained with fetters,  
There to 'wait the time appointed  
For his final execution.

Dreamed he saw the black-robed Chaplain  
Come to speak of consolation ;  
Dreamed he heard the words of comfort  
Sounding strangely (Ah, how strangely !—  
Sad to think how very strangely  
Come those words to ear of culprit,  
Never taught to seek their lessons,  
Never taught to know their meaning !)

Dreamed he saw the fatal gibbet,  
Dreamed he saw the upturned faces  
Of the multitude below him ;  
Dreamed he felt Jack Ketch's fingers  
Busy round his neck, adjusting  
Noose of rope that was to hang him  
Like a dog, not human creature !

Dreamed that in that awful moment,  
Came a shout, a cry, a calling ;  
Dreamed he heard " Reprieve !" loud shouted.

Dreamed he heard of transportation  
Being his commuted sentence.

This last thought possessed him wholly  
When he woke, and found he'd dreamed all.  
Grave he pondered, till it struck him,  
That he'd carry out the substance  
Of that portion of his dreaming,  
Where he felt relieved from terror.  
He resolved to seek his fortune  
In a fresh new scene of action ;  
He determined on the scheme of  
Nothing less than transportation,  
Voluntary transportation,  
Willing, prompt, self-transportation,  
Most transporting transportation,—  
In words other,—emigration.

And he said to mother Norah,  
To his wife, his Minnie Wather,  
Better half, his Frisky-Whisky,  
“ I've made up my mind to try and  
Live a new life, life more dacent ;  
So let's go, and try what turns up  
In the New World over yonder.”

On the deck stood Drop o' Wather,



Turned and waved his hat at parting;  
On the deck of the good vessel,  
Outward bound for the long voyage,  
Stood and waved his hat at parting  
From the dear old Mother Country;  
(Pity she does sometimes prove but  
Little of a mother to some  
Of her less fate-favoured children;  
Those, for instance, so unhappy  
As to be born poor and lowly,  
Giving them, alas, no teaching,  
More like step-dame than a mother!  
But we'll hope for her true honour,  
That she'll take—like Burns's Nickie—  
“Tak' a thought, and mend,” some day soon);  
Meantime stood there Drop o' Wather  
Waving hat, and saying goodbye  
To his friends, and to Old England:  
“Farewell England! dear Old England  
Well she knows our hearts are with her,  
Though we leave her shores for ever,  
Though we hardly hope to see her  
Once again before we die, yet  
Still our hearts cling fondly by her,

Proud of her, and loving always,  
Dear old England, native country !”

Then a pause ; and then he shouted,  
Shouted loudly Drop o' Wather :

“Southward ! Southward ! now then, South-  
ward !”

And the ship went sailing forward  
On her way of trust and promise,  
Southward, southward ; Drop o' Wather  
Looking steadfastly before him,  
As confronting firm the future.

And his people gave a loud cheer,  
Just to cheer him up at parting,  
As the ship sailed southward, southward ;  
And they cried, “ Goodbye, my boy, then !  
Goodbye, Norah ! Goodbye, Minnie !  
Take good care of yourselves, darlints !  
Let us know how you all get on !  
Best of all good luck go wid' ye !  
So God bless ye ! and God speed ye !”

Thus departed Drop o' Wather,  
Drop o' Wather, the fine fellow,  
With his trust of doing better,  
With, at least, that firm intention,

## NOTES.

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THE SONG OF DROP O' WATHER.—This London Legend—if it may be so called—has been suggested by an interesting Indian tradition, given to the world in the form of a beautiful poem. The picturesque scenery, vivid description, and glowing imagery to be found in that production, are fully felt; while their charm is no more disparaged by the present sportive trifle, than the sublimity of Shakspeare has been lessened by the burlesques and parodies that have been made from time to time upon his great dramas. The tragedy of *Hamlet* is exalted, not lowered, by Mr. Poole's admirably clever Travestie. The mere fact of burlesquing a work avouches its excellence—certainly its popularity.

PAGE 9. *By the Half Moon, &c.*

This is the sign of a public-house—a frequent sign in London—and not an allusion to the planet Luna, or to the Turkish Crescent.

PAGE 15. *To the regions, Hyde-Park, May-Fair.*

Hyde-Park is a considerable tract of ground, lying at

the extreme West point of the metropolis. It was, in conjunction with its neighbour, Kensington-Gardens, felicitously styled by Edmund Burke, "the lungs of London." May-Fair is a district situated between Grosvenor-square and Piccadilly; and ranks as the very nucleus of fashionable town-residence.

PAGE 19. *In the lane of dirty Drury.*

Drury-lane leads down from Holborn to the Strand; and contains the celebrated theatre called by its name.

PAGE 32. *Through Bedford Bury.*

Bedfordbury is a narrow thoroughfare, running from King-street, Covent-garden, to the Strand.

PAGE 36. *Lest he'd call the far-off Charleys.*

A body of effete officials employed before the time of policemen. They were facetiously denominated *Watchmen*; being invariably found asleep when required. They were a race even more evidencing British delight in "holding on by nonsense," than the beadles themselves. Since the time of that "ancient and most quiet watchman," Dogberry, they have been noted types of functionary futility. For a further account of this extinct tribe, the reader is referred to a charming paper by Mr. Leigh Hunt, in a work called *The Companion*.

PAGE 43. *Seemed of th' Emerald Isle a native.*

The Emerald Isle is one of the names for Hibernia, or Ireland. Drop o' Wather, though English born, retained much trace of his Hibernian descent, with an occasional touch of the brogue.

PAGE 57. *With white-bait down at Blackwall.*

The white-bait dinners at Blackwall are renowned. Members of Parliament, civic aldermen, and such distinguished authorities in gastronomic particulars, give the sanction of their approval and patronage to these feasts.

PAGE 64. *The island called Eelpie.*

Eelpie island is an ait in the river Thames. It derives its name from a hostelry, where pies made of Thames eels are eaten ; and is a favourite resort of Cockneydom.

PAGE 73. *Out crept Minnie, &c.*

The incident of Minnie's leaving her room in so destitute a condition, would not have been recorded, lest it might shock the polite reader's fastidiousness ; but an illustrious writer's example has shown how that may be spared, by adverting to the circumstance in French, and describing his heroine's state by the words '*sans habillement.*'

PAGE 77. *Clapping on his low-crowned beaver.*

The modern reader may feel interested to know

that the celebrated Bow-street officer, Townsend, did wear a remarkably low-crowned hat, of a resolute and determined cut,—as if it defied contumacy, and brow-beat offenders into deference by the mere effect of its squab sturdiness. His top-boots carried the stamp of authority, his blue coat and brass buttons teemed with importance, and his broad low hat was brim-ful of dignity. Edmund Spenser's immortal words (slightly altered) describing Belphœbe, might aptly be quoted :—

“His low-crowned castor, full of bailiff pomp,  
 Like a broad table did itself dispread,  
 For Law, its lofty triumphs to engrave,  
 And write the battles of its great godhead :  
 All office-honour might therein be read ;  
 For there its dwelling was.  
 Upon his eyelids many traces sat,  
 Under the shadow of his beavered brows.”

Townsend's influence was *supremè*. Crowds melted before him, mobs dispersed, like clouds at the sun's approach :—

“As waves before  
 A vessel under sail, so men obeyed,  
 And fell before his stem.”

The common herd dreaded and admired ; while patrician exclusiveness adored. Nobility and Beauty smiled approval. Peers of the realm were hand and glove with him ; and the Blood-Royal of England exchanged nods with him.

## VOCABULARY.

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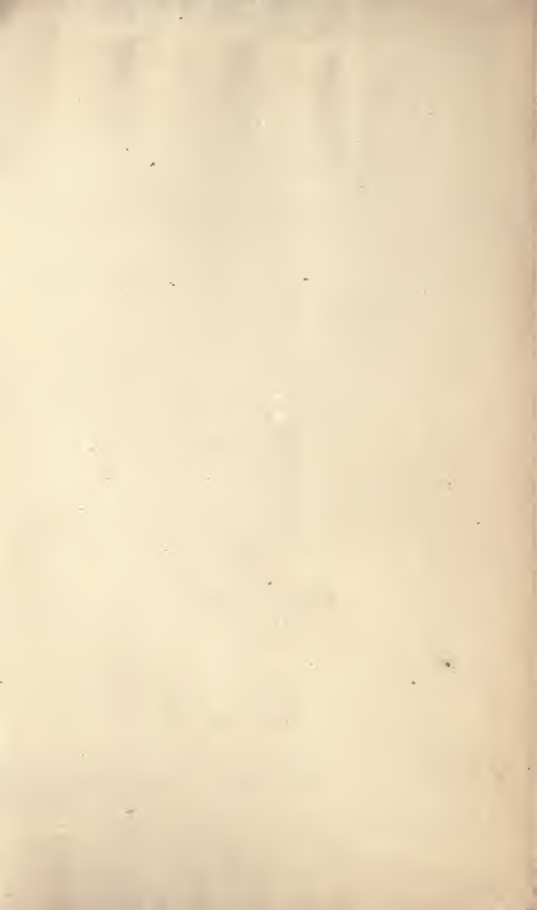
- Arrah, a *Hibernian ejaculation*.  
Bandana, a *silk handkerchief*.  
Beak's order, a *magistrate's summons or warrant*.  
Beaver, a *hat*.  
Belcher-nimmer, a *pick-pocket*.  
Big-Thame-Water, *the River Thames*.  
Bilk, to *balk*.  
Bob Dabbin, *friend of Drop o' Wather*.  
Bouncer, a *lie*.  
Bunnytwitchnose, *the rabbit*.  
Burton, a *famous kind of ale*.  
Charley, a *watchman*.  
Chinny-panpipes, a *street musician; friend of Drop o' Wather*.  
Chisel, to *defraud*.  
Chouse, to *cheat*.  
Cracksman, a *housebreaker*.  
Crammers, *lies*.  
Crib, a *lodging*.  
Cribbing, *stealing*.  
Daddles, *hands*.  
Darlint, *darling*.  
Dew of Mountain, *Mountain Dew; whisky*.  
Dingledong, *the dustman*.

- Dodge, *a trick.*  
 Drop o' Wather, *the Hero of the Legend; son of Norah.*  
 Dull-Eye, *the codfish.*  
 Duskylaw, *the darkness.*  
 Eliza, *a fine sort of strawberry.*  
 Fantoccini, *puppets.*  
 Fetch, *a pretence,*  
 Filching, *stealing.*  
 File, *a keen fellow.*  
 Fogle, *a pocket handkerchief.*  
 Gag, *talk.*  
 Goosey-Gander, *the goose.*  
 Gossip, *a tippling companion.*  
 Gramachree, *heart's darling.*  
 Grimalkin, *the cat.*  
 Highjig, *the tight-rope dancer.*  
 Honey, *a term of endearment.*  
 Inguns, *onions.*  
 Jack Ketch, *the hangman.*  
 Jack Longbow, *a great talker; a yarn-spinner.*  
 Jet-with-gold-bill, *the blackbird.*  
 Ken, *a thief's haunt.*  
 Lagging, *putting in prison.*  
 Larking, *practical joking.*  
 Lion, *poacher's name for hare.*  
 Maccaroni, *a fop; a dandy; a beau; an exquisite.*  
 Majordomo, *the bulldog.*  
 Mantalini, *a hero in "Nicholas Nickleby."*  
 Millemlikefun, *Drop o' Wather's stick.*  
 Minnie Harper, *Frisky-Whisky; wife of Drop o' Wather.*  
 Minny, *the kitten.*  
 Nab, *to catch.*  
 Ninian Moucher, *a guest of Youseenow.*  
 Noddledizzy, *a giddy-pate; an idler.*



- Nogo Wouldyou, *the court where Paw-Paw-Keeneyes lived.*
- Norah, *mother of Drop o' Wather.*
- Ochone, *alas.*
- Pal, *companion.*
- Palaver, *futile talk.*
- Paw-Paw-Keeneyes, *the stylish Thimblerrigger; the Black-Leg.*
- Pigeon, *to cheat victims at cards.*
- Piggy-wiggy, *the sucking-pig.*
- Pluck, *to strip of money by gambling.*
- Portemonnaie, *a purse.*
- Potheen, *Irish whisky.*
- Prigs, *thieves.*
- Pudgywheezy, *the lap-dog.*
- Punch-and-Judy, *the puppet-show.*
- Queershin, *the Acrobat; the Strong Man; friend of Drop o' Wather.*
- Raddyshees, *radishes.*
- Raff, *a rogue.*
- Ralph, *the raven.*
- Red-Hairy, *a fine sort of gooseberry.*
- Red-Morocco, *a leather purse.*
- Rhino, *money.*
- Runners, *constables.*
- Scamp, *a blackguard.*
- Scuggycocktail, *the squirrel.*
- Shillelagh, *a stick.*
- Shiners, *guineas.*
- Shoe-shoe-mender, *the cobbler.*
- Smithereens, *small pieces.*
- Snug-noozem, *the spirit of sleep.*
- Song-sky-high, *the lark.*
- Spalpeen, *fellow.*
- Speckle-breaster, *the thrush.*

- Spider-Legs, *the crawfish.*  
Spree, *practical fun.*  
Stone Jug, *a Jail.*  
Stunning, *amazing.*  
Swag, *plunder.*  
Taradiddle, *a lie.*  
Thimblerrigger, *a player with peas and thimble; a gambler at fairs and horse-races.*  
Ticker, *a watch.*  
Tile, *a hat.*  
Tip-staff, *a constable.*  
Top-sawyer, *head man.*  
Tough-and-True, *Drop o' Wather's name for his dog.*  
Traps, *bailiffs.*  
Twigged, *understood.*  
Twopenny, *the postman.*  
Wall-eyed Tommy, *the pot-boy.*  
Water-well-it, *the milkman.*  
Whack, *beat.*  
Whackers, *lies.*  
White-giant, *a fine sort of raspberry.*  
Wipe, *a pocket handkerchief.*  
Yarn-spinner, *a story-teller.*  
Youseenow, *a spendthrift young gent.*



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